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The Winter Goddess: Percht, Holda, and Related Figures

LOTTE MOTZ

MOST of our knowledge of Germanic myth is derived from the Old Icelandic texts and especially from the *Eddas*. The Eddic tales centre their attention on the trials and triumphs of the male members of the pantheon and tell us little of the female forces.[1] That these wielded power we learn, however, from votive monuments, from the names of natural and man-made places, from Tacitus's *Germania*, and from the traditions of the countryside.

From these heterogeneous sources scholars have tried to reconstruct the features of the ancient goddesses, and have drawn figures which are to some degree related to fertility and, sometimes, death.[2] In these attempts the scholars have made little use of the abundant information offered by the long memory of folk-belief. I have turned, in contrast, to folk-customs and folk-legends and I claim that the material has allowed me to discern the clearly defined form of potent female forces, imperious Ladies of the Woodland, who found their origin at a very early stage of social development. More specifically I assert:

1. The female forces, here discussed, are indeed divinities.
2. Behind the many local manifestations we may recognise one basic form with vivid characteristics.
3. These forces belong to a widely diffused type: they developed from guardians of nature and of animals, found among hunting civilizations, into a more complex godhead, and resemble in this development the 'Lady of Wild Beasts' of ancient civilizations.
4. The forces have arisen in indigenous belief and belong to the North and North-west of Europe.

I have taken my material, on the whole, from the collection of Viktor Waschnitius, entitled *Perht, Holda und verwandte Gestalten.*[3]

The figures under discussion appear under two main designations: Frau Holle, especially prominent in Hesse and Thuringia, and Frau Perchta who belongs, above all, to the Alpine regions. Various other names have also been recorded, such as Stampa, Rupfa, Luzie, Frau Frîe, or Frau Gôde.

To affirm the claim of divine stature (i.e. that people had faith in these figures) I point to the following:

The anger and ordinances of the church. 'They are sinners' we hear in a fifteenth-century source, 'who leave food for Perchta in the "night of Perchta" to obtain prosperity and well-being in the coming year.'[5] And Christians are earnestly adjured to believe no longer in 'frawen percht' or 'frawn holt,' in 'herodiasis' or 'dyana,' 'the heathen goddess;'[6] in another document Perchta is actually equated with Diana: '. . . *diana quod vulgariter dicitur fraw Percht* (commonly known as fraw Percht) . . .'[7] A tract of the thirteenth century complains that the young would rather chant of *'domina* Perchta' than say their prayers to the Virgin Mary.[8] Luther also turns his disapproval against 'fraw Hulde' with her 'tremendous nose.'[9]

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The figures appear in the context of a sacred period. Midwinter, especially the nights between Christmas and Epiphany, is the season of honour to the spirits. Though the feasts are Christian we know that they coincide in time with earlier pagan celebrations. In some Tyrolean villages Frau Perchta comes at Christmastime to inspect the order of the household.[10] Her anger and her punishment falls, in Voigtland, on those who have not eaten herring and dumplings in her honour on the last day of the year.[11] On this day also the Chlungeli of Switzerland looks to the state of distaffs and of spindles.[12]

Offerings. Food may be presented to Perchta and related spirits. In Villnös near Bozen in South Tyrol it is dumplings and eggs, placed on rooftops in the night before Epiphany;[13] during the same night the Stampa of Wälschnoven receives a dish named after her, *Gstampanuden;*[14] and food awaits Frau Bert in Möhldorf of Bavaria on Shrove Tuesday on the kitchen table.[15]

The name of the spirit has entered German speech. Some days, and more often nights, bear the Lady's name. *Perchtennacht* is in Styria the night before Epiphany,[16] Saturday is *Frauhollenabend* in the Rhöngebirge,[17] while *Hollenabend* designates the Thursday before Christmas in the Westerwald,[18] The *Chrungelinacht,* named after the Chrungeli, probably falls within the Christmas season.[19] The belief in Frau Holle left its imprint on the landscape (especially in the mountainous region of Central Germany). Here stand the trees, named *Frau Hullibaum,*[20] a pond is known as *Frau Holles Badeplatz;*[21] the *Frau Hullistein* is a rock on which she rests after having helped girls to carry their load.[22]

Customs and traditions have received the Lady's name. We find the *Perchtenlauf* or *Perchtenjagd* of Salzburg and Tyrol, the *Streggelejagen* and *Posterlijagen* of Switzerland, or the *bechtelen* of Switzerland and of Alsatia, the last designating either a masked procession or a feast.[23]

Powers attributed to the spirits. The power of the female forces may be directed to small matters, such as the soiling of the flax on the distaff of the lazy spinstress, but it may determine also the course of the entire year, the fertility of man or beast, and the health and the well-being of the household. Frau Holle also is, in some parts of Germany, in charge of making the weather, for she causes snow to fall when she shakes her feather pillows.

We must understand that not all aspects are represented to the same extent in every region, that the female force appears in somewhat varied form in various places, and that in some her strength has come more fully to the fore. Some parts of Germany, such as Westphalia, show little evidence of her existence, while in others the customs observed in her name may dominate the seasonal traditions, as does the *Perchtenlauf* in Salzburg. And we may understand that in such areas she was the most important of the supernatural powers in whose hands, it was believed, would lie the prosperity of the population. It would therefore be difficult to deny her a firm position in the faith of men.

We shall now try to discern the characteristic qualities of the spirits.

The season of the goddess. She is associated, above all, with the feasts of wintertime. In the village Triers of Tyrol she is thought to injure infants on Christmas Eve and in the night before Epiphany, and they are placed beneath their cradle for protection.[24] Children must be quiet in the Mölltal of Carinthia during the same period so as not to rouse the wrath of Perchta.[25] The *Perschtmilch,* the milk from which Perchta and her retinue had partaken in this night, is fed to poultry and to cattle in Waidhofen to give them vigour and fertility.[26] In Würzburg Frau Hulle chastises, the night before Christmas, the ill-behaved among the children,[27] and she arrives in Göttingen with

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presents for the good on the last day of the year.[28] During the twelve nights of Christmas one may find her roaming in the fields near Weimar,[29] while the Perchten of Lienz run their rapid course on the Thursday before Lent.[30] On the Thursday before Christmas Bercht arrives in Ellwangen in Swabia with a wooden spoon in her hand and a crown upon her head.[31] On Shrove Tuesday she appears in Mansfeld.[32]

Let us now turn to the traditions which grew up around these forces, beginning with *domestic and seasonal customs.* We have already remarked on the gifts of food for Perchta; fried cakes would be placed on the roofs of Tyrolean houses, milk and dumplings held in readiness for her and her 'children.' Sometimes food is eaten in her honour, such as the *Bachlkoch,* a porridge covered with a layer of honey, of which all the members of a household, servants, as well as master, must partake.[33] Masked performances marked by frenzy and noise are prominent in the Alpine regions. The *Perchtenlauf* or *Perchtenjagd,* the most famous, takes place on the three Thursdays before Christmas in villages of Salzburg,[34] on the *Perchtentag* (Epiphany) near Kitzbühel,[35] and sometimes also during Shrovetide (*Fasching*), as in Lienz of Tyrol.[36] The Perchten are impersonated by the young men of the village and appear in some places in double form, as 'handsome' (*schöne*) and as 'hideous' (*schiache*) Perchten. While the 'handsome' wear the traditional costume of the region, the 'frightful' may be cloaked in fur, usually black, their heads covered by the *Perchtenhaube,* their belts hung with bells, their faces hidden behind masks of terrifying aspect. Their race proceeds from house to house, or even from village to village, through the valleys, amidst the deafening clamour of their bells, their whips, their shouts of joy.

The *Streggelejagen,* which takes place at Eastertime,[37] and the *Posterlijagen* of Entlebuch in December,[38] are enacted in the same orgiastic manner in the name of the Streggele and the Posterli of Switzerland. In the Mölltal Dame Perichtel herself, cloaked and masked, sounds a cowbell before the houses of the village so that she may receive a gift.[39]

Legends of the Wild Hunt or Wild Host. The frenzy and the din, the ever-present elements of noise and speed of the regional traditions, find a counterpart in the Wild Host or Wild Hunt of legend. We frequently meet in German folklore tales about this phantom hunting party or phantom army which rides at night in sound and fury through the sky, and this host, the stories have it, is often headed by the goddess.[40] Musical instruments and the voices of beasts create clamour as the ever-present mark of the phenomenon. A description of the *wüttige heer,* which issues from the Hörselberg under the leadership of Dame Holle, speaks of the blowing of horns, the roaring of wild beasts, the squealing of pigs.[41] Luther wrote of 'fraw Hulda' with her fiddle;[42] the Savage Hunt of Heidesheim is known for its music, its wailing cats and howling dogs. The legends also observe the presence of mutilated and fur-clad figures, of dwarfs and giants, of artisans carrying their tools. Frequently, though not always, the orgiastic train and its leader is beheld by the frightened spectator in the nights of wintertime.

Relation between rite and legend. We have noted earlier the close resemblance between some of the rites rendered to the goddess, and aspects of the Wild Hunt. In a close examination, Otto Höfler has pointed to so many parallels between the two phenomena that they seem to be indeed images of one another.[43]

We have some evidence that the Lady and her frenzied followers did, in actual fact, go in procession through the village streets. A church canon of the ninth century speaks in condemnation of women who assert that they had ridden out with a crowd of nocturnal 'demons,' and a later version of the canon names the 'witch Holda' as their

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leader.[44] A Bavarian manuscript of the fifteenth century, in its turn, comments on the women under the leadership of Perchta who approach human dwellings in the Christmas season.[45] We are told in a document of the seventeenth century of a 'multitude of maenads' in the wake of Werra in the Voigtland.[46] And a sermon of the fifteenth century censures those who still believe that Diana, 'commonly known as fraw Percht,' is wont to wander through the darkness with her throng.[47]

A man brought to a witch's trial in 1630 confessed that he had become part of Dame Holle's retinue and had followed her on New Year's Day into the Venusberg, the mountain from which issues in legend the Wild Host of the Lady.[48] A woman was exiled from the town of Bern in the sixteenth century after she had admitted to having ridden with 'frow Selden' in the *wüttisheer*.[49] Jacob Grimm reports in his collection of folktales that the legendary hunt of the Posterli is annually reenacted in her honour.[50] The expression 'to ride with Holle,' meaning both 'to be dishevelled' and 'to participate in a witch's ride,' testifies to a belief in the existence of the army of the goddess and of the joining of humans in the host.

While we cannot be sure that men or women did actually ride in the nocturnal train, it is clear that there was belief in the existence of such activity.

Let us now turn to the functions and activities of the spirits.

Association with spinning. The most important activity of the goddess is the supervision of the spinning by local girls and women. Sometimes they must accomplish a set amount of work. Ten reels are to be spun, for instance, by the Wednesday before Christmas (*Weihnachtsfronfasten*) in Switzerland, or the Streggele will seize the careless girl or woman.[51] Frau Holle soils with her excrement the flax of the neglectful spinstress in Franconia;[52] Perchta may decree that she who did not complete her task would have ill luck with her spinning in the coming year.[53] She may even, as in Salzburg, open the stomach of a girl to refill it with rubbish and with dirt.[54] Often punishment is meted out to those who had turned the spindle at forbidden times; all spinning is to cease, for instance, on *Frau Hollenabend* in the Rhöngebirge, or during the twelve days of Christmas in Swabia.[55]

Dealing punishment or reward. In her supervision of the spinning girls the female force appears as punitive or rewarding power, and she may also bestow on children, according to their merit, the pleasure of her gifts or the pain of beatings with her switch.[56] The figures of the Alpine regions, above all Perchta, are given to the punishment of opening the stomach of the evil-doer and filling it with straw and stones.[57]

In more general terms, the Lady may determine weal or woe for the entire year. Much flax is placed by girls near the Hörselberg upon their distaff at Christmastime when Frau Holle starts her round, for she promises 'A good year for every thread,' but the material must be worked off by Epiphany, for on her return she threatens 'A bad year for every thread.'[58]

Swift is the action of the Ladies upon insult; a girl who had laughed at Frau Berchta and her retinue lost her sight for an entire year,[59] and a man who slighted Frau Holle near Hasloch, in the central area of her powers, went astray, became disturbed in spirit, and soon afterwards gave up his life. In the Voigtland Holda deals punishment to those who had not eaten of a certain porridge in her honour on the day of Epiphany.[60]

Of rewards we hear more rarely, but girls who are diligent in their tasks are given silver pennies by Frau Holle,[61] and to offer dumplings to Frau Perchta on her special day (Epiphany) brings blessing in some villages of Carinthia.[62] She also rewards

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households if they are neat and tidy on the day of Epiphany in Lower Austria, and to those who have repaired her carriage she gives payment of pure gold.[63]

Punishment and reward thus extend from the slight to the important, with the ill which she may bring clearly evident to men. She is thus awaited both in terror and in hope, feared or honoured, and adored or appeased.

Special alliance with the young. Fertility is granted to those women who immerse themselves within Frau Holle's well.[64] Berchta shares her cave in Tyrol with unborn babies and those who want a child must seek her in her dwelling place.[65]

Perchta frequently is surrounded by a throng of infants—those, it is said, who had to die before they could be blessed with the baptismal water, the smallest lagging behind and burdened by a pitcher which is heavy with the tears of mothers. Sometimes the salvation of the smallest is achieved through a kind villager who may call it by a name, or arrange the toddler's garment.[66] A story, current in Tyrol, claims that the dogs which yelp and bark in the Lady's train are these children who had suffered transformation.[67] Stampa of Nassereith terrorizes the countryside, for she is believed to rob parents of their young.[68]

The Lady as educator. The activity noted in this section parallels, to some extent, that which was described under the heading 'Reward and Punishment.' For instance in her passage through Lower Austria at Christmas time Perchta seizes the children who had behaved badly, and this action is held up to them as a deterrent (in this role she is named *Kinderschreck* by Waschnitius).[69] In the Mölltal of Carinthia Perchta frightens children who are noisy in the night before Epiphany; in Bergen she may even slash their stomach and fill it with a foreign substance, such as dirt.[70] Luzie of the Böhmerwald, who also inflicts this punishment, uses pebbles and straw for the operation.[71] In the area of Göttingen, on the other hand, Frau Holle brings on the last day of the year gifts as reward for good behaviour.[72] In the Lautenthal she takes the naughty to her forest so that she may reform and reshape them into better beings.[73] She may also keep them in her well where she endows the virtuous with unfailing luck and turns the nasty into changelings.[74]

The goddess, who is not herself a mother, thus is instrumental, on occasion, in the rearing of the young, sometimes at a distance from their home of birth. That the souls of unbaptized infants should follow in the wake of Perchta obviously is a Christian explanation for her strongly marked alliance with a group of children not her own. The goddess thus is seen as foster-mother, nurse or teacher to the growing. As educative force we may view Frau Holle in a famous fairy-tale, recorded by the brothers Grimm, for here she rewards with gold the diligent and marks with pitch the slothful maiden, and a spindle, we may recall, is of some importance to the narrative.[75] The role of educative force has also fallen to the Ladies in their supervision of the spinning girls.

Alliance with women. We noted earlier how frequently 'women' are noted as followers of the nocturnal huntress, and how frequently she attends to the work of women. In her strong association with the craft of spinning especially she concerns herself with women of all ages.

The dwelling-places of the spirits. Perchta is known as *wild* in some regions; we know that the adjective had a meaning, almost lost in our time, of 'belonging to the forest.'[76] Perchta, designated as *wild,* indeed is a creature of the woodland; except for glimpses we receive of her habitation in a cave, as in Lusarn, she is not stationary or settled in a dwelling place, for hers is the entirety of groves and glens. Frau Holle, on the other hand, of Hesse and Thuringia, is placed within a special habitation, the mountains Kyffhäuser or Hörselberg, and linked also with a point of the landscape, a stone, a tree,

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or a lake.[77] Neither Holle nor Perchta, however, lives in closeness to the cornfield or the byre or the timbered settlements of men, for they belong with the unplanted forest and with mountains, caves, or wells.

Dual aspect: We already noted that the Lady may bestow prosperity and happiness on those who pleased her and that she may be generous in her gifts to children; we must also note that in places she is viewed as a fully evil spirit. In Tyrol Perchta roams the fields and valleys in the *Klöcklernächte* of December to destroy the man or woman whom she meets;[78] Stampa of Nassereith steals the young. Near Lerbach in the Harz Frau Holle is visualised as a crone with glowing eyes, peering into houses to injure those whose lights are still burning in the later portion of the night.[79]

Dual aspect of appearance. Her visual form is less often of the loveliness of youth than of the unpleasing countenance of age. Near the Kyffhäuser Frau Holle may be old and hunchbacked.[80] In the Mölltal Perchta may appear as *grauer Wuzel,* 'grey, wizened wight;'[81] the name Butzebrecht is used in Swabia to designate old and ugly women;[82] Frau Wolle, who lives in the *Frauwullenloch* of the mountain Schlachtenberg, is advanced in age.[83] In Tyrol 'Percht' is a synonym for 'unkempt hag;' 'to ride with Holle'—*mött de Holle fahren*—means in Hesse 'to have one's hair in utter disarray,' a sense also expressed by the term *Hollezopf,* 'Holle-braid' in Nassau (Hesse). Perchta is characterized, on occasion, by her long or 'iron' nose, and Dame Holle by her protruding teeth.[84]

Yet the Ladies may be fair; thus, Frau Holle is fair when she is observed in her bath in *Frau Hullis Badeplatz;*[85] Dame Percht was beautiful when she rewarded with gold the repairing of her carriage. Percht as queen of the Heimchen in the Voigtland is of tall and stately figure, veiled and clothed in white.[86] The girl who impersonates Frau Holle in Wertheim will dress in white and wear a crown upon her head.

Some of the features of the goddess recall the features of an animal, the 'iron' nose being reminiscent of the beak of a bird of prey, and the 'long teeth' of a mammal, possibly a goat or wolf, as mentioned above. The dishevelled hair belonging to girls named 'Brechte' or 'Perhte', might be brought into relation with the ecstatic behaviour of those who follow in the Lady's train.

We may conclude that dual aspect of character and of appearance is part of the nature of the goddess.

Animal associations. We find, above all, dogs following her carriage or barking in the Wild Hunt, or goats. Dame Perchta and Luzia sometimes appear as goats; a girl impersonating Frau Holle in Leobschütz is designated as *Himmelsziege,* 'celestial goat;'[87] the Posterli of Switzerland may be a goat, but also is seen as a donkey or a witch.[88] Bergda is a hairy monster near Saalfelden,[89] and Stampa may appear with a horse's head before the villagers.[90] We find the goddess thus in association with animals of the chase, dogs and horses (both having wild ancestors in Central and Northern Europe), and with the goat of pastoral life (the ibex is also native to the Alps). She may also have a closeness with birds of prey, as has been already said.

Relation with men. Few instances show the goddess as wife or partner in a love relation.[91] Of small significance also are erotic features in the legends and the rites, though these may be a vehicle for lawless and for orgiastic behaviour. We can conclude that we are dealing, on the whole, with an unmated spirit.

Transport. The mode of progress is not always noted. Perchta with her throng of children obviously walks or flies; a swiftly moving carriage is recurrently visualized, as with Frau Gôde of the Altmark. For the repairing of such a carriage rich reward is rendered by Frau Holle or Frau Perchta (of Thuringia and the Voigtland). Sometimes

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the Ladies are astride their horses, like Frau Holle and her female retinue in Kassel.[92] As leader of the Wild Hunt the figure races over land or through the air. And we may understand that Bercht and Holda frequently are visualized in movement, and often in swift movement, and we may consider speed of progress as one of their characteristic qualities.

Themes appearing only in Central and Northern Germany, clustering especially around Frau Holle. Dame Holle, we have noted, is, in contrast to Frau Perchta, in possession of a dwelling place and linked with features of the landscape. She also merges on occasion with another important figure of German folklore: the 'White Lady,' who is mistress of a secret dwelling and is glimpsed only rarely and only by a chosen being.[93]

In some instances the spirit exerts an influence on the produce of the earth. As Frau Harke of North Germany she had introduced the cultivation of the turnip; Frau Gôde's furious ride across the fields of Grabow increases their fertility, as does Frau Holle's walk around the ploughed land near the mountain Meissner.[94]

Mighty are the powers of Dame Holle, for she rules even the elements; she may cause the snow to fall or the fog to gather,[95] and she has been observed, usually in the middle of the day, as she takes a bath in her lake, the *Frau Hollenteich.* In Hesse she even played a part in building the natural environment, for a stone falling from her shoe became a mountain.

In the areas of her dominion Frau Holle is apparently of such towering importance that she has drawn onto herself talents and functions which are traditionally attributed to a variety of folklore figures. That she is responsible for the falling snow underlines her aspect as goddess of the winter season. She most strongly differs from Dame Percht in her association with points of the local landscape and with her settlement in a mountain or a well. She is thus not only a roving goddess, but also mistress of a secret dwelling.

Summary. It has not been possible to cite in this short examination more than a few instances of a given trait. It has therefore not been shown how very firmly drawn the outlines are, how few the motifs, and how consistently they recur. The folk-legends, folk-customs and historical documents thus combine to render a vivid image of a virgin deity of the woodland, of dual aspect, concerned with the education of the young, especially of girls in the supervision of their spinning, who receives offerings of food and is associated in legend and in rite with ecstatic motion and with terrifying sound, and whose festival is clearly placed within the winter season.

Since we may consider Percht and Holda and their relatives to be figures of belief we shall now try to understand some aspects of their religious significance.

The supernatural owners of nature. We have noted earlier that these spirits do not dwell within the settlements of men; when a place of habitation is cited it is a cave, a mountain, or a well. As leader of the Wild Hunt the Lady is encountered in her furious chase across the forest; sometimes she is beheld by the frightened wanderer as she roams the fields and valleys. Even in her visitations of men's houses she has travelled from afar. And we regard the spirits by virtue of their habitations as creatures of the wilderness.

Demons or deities of the wild indeed are met in religious systems throughout the world as masters and as guardians of the natural environment.[96] The beasts of woodland and water, in their turn, possess a ruler and protector who usually is seen in human form, but also may appear in the shape of the animals in his care, thus as a reindeer, wolf, or bear.[97] On a higher level of the divine hierarchy there exists also a

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ruler over all the creatures of the wilderness, a 'Lord of the Beasts,' or the genius of the locality may have dominion also over its animal inhabitants. This Lord or Lady of the beasts watches out for cruelty towards his fosterlings, and determines also which one is to fall to the hunter's arrow. In this belief, therefore, the hunter's fortune depends on the favour of the supernatural guardian of beasts.

It is clear that the concept of the 'Lord of Beasts' would have originated in a hunting civilization, and the belief is encountered in its least adulterated form among those nations which have stayed closest to the level of development of a hunters' culture, as for instance the inhabitants of northern Eurasia.

In pastoral communities the protector of the feral beasts also assumes very frequently the guardianship of their domesticated kind. Among the Karagass, for instance, the tutelary spirit of wild reindeer watches also over the domesticated herds.[98] And in the course of time he even comes to the help of human hunters. The inhabitants of the Karakorum mountains in Central Asia adore the goddess Kurmuk who is mistress of the wild sheep and ibex of the rocky landscape; she is also a source of blessing for the pursuer of game who enjoys, usually, a special relationship with one of the superhuman maidens in her train.[99]

With the development of civilization the demons of the wilderness would extend their care also over human life, and, with the rise of national states, some figures would fuse to grow into national deities. We thus find in the ancient Mediterranean civilizations the worship of a great 'Lady of Wild Beasts' of many forms, such as the Persian Artemis, the Kretan Britomartis-Diktynna, the Etruscan Artimis-Artumes, the Taurian Parthenos, the Despoina of Lykosura, or the Anatolian Ephesis.[100] These divinities of archaic origins retained their importance through the ages and extended the range of their activity, so that in time they might concern themselves even with the growth of planted crops while still keeping some of their most ancient attributes.

In Germanic areas the role of guardian of the wild and its animals has fallen to many creatures, e.g. to the *huldre* and the *skogsrå* (ruler of the forest) of Norway and of Sweden, the *Riesen* (giants) of northern Germany, the *Holzleute* or *Moosleute* of Franconia and Bavaria, the *Waldweibchen* of the upper Palatinate, the *Lohjungfern* of the Harz, the *Buschweiblein* of Thuringia and Saxony, the *Wildleute, Selige Fräulein,* and *Fangen* of the Alps, who tend the goats,stags, or chamois native to the region.[101]

In just these places where an ancient form of faith is preserved, Dame Perchta and Dame Holda also are remembered in terror or adoration. The imperious Ladies of the woodland, appearing in areas which had clearly held, and still hold to some extent, a belief in the supernatural owners of the wilderness, would represent a more developed form of the simple spirits, one closer to the Lady of the Beasts of ancient time. We cannot be surprised at such a development because we are not dealing with truly isolated, primitive communities. That one name would appear in various regions, such as Percht in Salzburg and in Carinthia, would also point to a consolidation and coalescence of several figures.

While Percht and Holda no longer are concerned exclusively with the uncultivated forest, but look to the state of households, to the raising of human children, and even to the fertility of the fields, they have retained some elemental aspects. In some regions Perchta is characterized as *wild;* this designation or description she shares with other creatures of the woodland, the *wilde Leute, sylvani;* in some areas of Carinthia she has coalesced completely in form and function with the 'wood-wives' of the region, and she is married to the 'wood-man' (*om salvadegh)* in southern Tyrol.[102] Dame Harke of the Havelland of Northern Germany keeps the forest animals in her cave at night and leads

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them out to pasture when the morning dawns.[103]

The Ladies themselves may be visualized as animals, and animals may travel in their retinue; the Streggele of Switzerland and Dame Holle of Leobschütz appear as goats, and the followers of Percht, the Perchten, show through horns on their masks, their fur-cloaks and their fur-hats that they wish to impersonate a beast. The enormous or 'iron' nose of Lady Percht or Lady Holle is reminiscent of the beak of a bird, and the *Schnabelpercht* of Rauris possesses a beak of cloth.

In their leadership of the Wild Hunt Percht and Holda are brought into relation with the woodland beasts, though as hunter rather than as guardian. We know that such a transformation often takes place in the development of the demons of wild nature. Cats and dogs, goats or grunting pigs sometimes belong with the Wild Host itself and show the Lady to be surrounded by her animals—the image pointing, possibly, to her more ancient role of guardian. Dogs especially are noted in the retinue; since dogs are closely related to wolves we might understand the alliance of the Lady with her pack as a vestige of her more archaic form as *Wolfshirt* ('shepherd of wolves'), a figure of Germanic and non-Germanic tradition.[104]

In their ability to manipulate the weather (Frau Holle of Göttingen and Baba-Percht of Slovenic regions send the snows of wintertime) the spirits under discussion also show themselves to be masters of the natural environment.

The season of the goddess and its significance. We noted that the activity of the deities unfolds almost always in the winter season, and more specifically, in the last part of December and the beginning of January. This period is dedicated in modern times to the celebration of the birth of Christ and the beginning of the solar year, the former representing in Germanic areas the most important of the festivals of the Christian religion. We know through the Old Norse texts that in the Scandinavian countries an equally important feast, often named *jól* (Yule), had been held in pagan time; the folk rites of Christmas in the Germanic areas, moreover, frequently show no relation to Christian belief and thus affirm that here a festival had been celebrated before Christianity had come to Europe.

The Synods and Penitentials of the medieval Church affirm, in their turn, the presence and the importance of the pagan mid-winter feast. No other tradition is so frequently and consistently condemned as the customs of the 'Calends of January' which consist above all in men's masquerading in the 'form of beasts,' and in the concomitant belief that through this action they had shed their human identity.[105] The customs are deplored in documents dealing with the habits of Celtic and Germanic nations, so that we may assume the traditions to be native to the North and North-West of Europe. It is true that beast masquerades also formed part of the Roman midwinter festival, but they are considered to be a foreign accretion to a celebration which had here assimilated traits from many distant quarters.[106]

Beasts and beast impersonations still prevail in modern folk traditions of the Christmas season. The *julbukk* and *jolegeiti* of Norway (the male and female 'goat of Yule') are straw puppets or young men disguised by straw or skins into the likeness of the beasts. *Fakse* (a horse) is the leading spirit of Christmastime in Setesdal in Norway.[107] Wolves and wolf disguises are especially prominent in midwinter. The *Wolfshirt,* mentioned earlier, gathers his 'flock' at the time of the midnight mass to tell each of the wolves what he is allowed to seize and devour in the coming year.[108] Olaus Magnus informs us that in the Baltic regions men are transformed into wolves in the twelve nights of Christmas;[109] the turning of a man into a werewolf belongs in many areas of Germany to this time of year.[110] A wolf mask, called Isengrind, haunts some

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towns of Switzerland on New Year's Eve.[111] In some areas of Germany the name of the wolf is not to be pronounced in December, while in others December is designated as *Wolfsmonat*—month of the wolf.

Cakes baked in the Christmas season frequently are shaped to form an animal, a stag, boar, wolf, or goat; in Scandinavia these pastries may be named *julgalt* (Yule boar), *juleoksen* (Yule ox), or *jolegeiti* (Yule goat).[112]

Midwinter celebrations in which men assume the guise of beasts, of sheep, of stags, or of wolves, are enacted also outside Germanic areas, as in the Balkans or the Pyrenean peninsula.[113] In Hungarian tradition two men dress as stag or bull respectively to wander on the second day of Christmas from house to house to perform their play.[114]

The impersonation of a woodland beast and thus the desire to achieve its identity implies a ritual relation between man and animal, i.e. between hunter and his prey. Such a relationship has been recognized as the mark of a hunting civilization.[115] In cases in which a domesticated animal is personified we may assume that a pastoral culture has left its imprint on the earlier conception. We may understand that the beast impersonations of midwinter originated in the context of a hunting culture; the traditions are best preserved in remote mountainous areas where archaic forms of life and archaic customs and beliefs are not easily swept away by the winds of progress.

In tracing the traditions of midwinter to the concerns of a society of hunters we may understand why the rites were enacted at a period that has no relation to agricultural activity or to the death and rebirth of vegetation. Winter, we must realize, is the season for the pursuit of many kinds of game (wolves and stags both mating in the winter months). Moreover, the snow covering in northern countries facilitates the capture of the prey, for in the North the art of ski-hunting was developed.[116] It may be significant that in Norse mythology the hunting gods Skathi and Ullr are both designated as 'snow-shoe gods.'

If we find the origin of the midwinter feast in a hunting culture we may understand why the Lady of the wilderness is so closely associated with the midwinter celebrations, for she too has risen, in the view of this study, from such ancient roots.

Initiatory themes and functions. We noted that it can be a function of Percht and Holda to punish or reward the young and thus show aspects of an educator. At times Hulda takes children for their education to her dwelling in the forest, and Percht is frequently surrounded by a group of infants, not her own. Stories of the education of the young by a superhuman being, especially if it takes place in the wilderness, bring to mind the practices of puberty initiation of primitive societies. In these, separation from parental dwellings and experiences inflicted by superhuman forces are essential for the spiritual second birth and for gaining adult status. The initiator would be the spiritual parent or foster-parent of the child, the role in which the goddess often is presented. The recurrent tale of Perchta's opening and refilling of human stomachs appears to be an initiatory motif. Mutilation often belongs with the actual initiatory rites and also with initiatory visions. The refilling of the body with a new substance obviously takes place only in initiatory dreams, as in those of the future shaman of some Australian tribes.[117] Mutilated men and men whose bodies have been cut so that their intestines trail behind are noted in descriptions of the wild Host which so frequently is headed by the goddess.[118]

The association of the Ladies with the craft of spinning, in its turn, points to their initiatory function. It seems that in archaic thought the labour of producing thread from a shapeless mass of wool or flax created the same awe as the forming of a tool

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from stone or iron, so that spinning, like smithcraft, was imbued with magical properties. Just as in myth the creation of the world is often achieved with the help of a specifically manufactured tool or weapon, so the destiny of men is wrought through the spinning of a thread. The place where girls and women gather to spin may become the site of the enactment of the female mysteries, as the smithy may become the meeting place of men's secret societies.[119] It has been observed by Mircea Eliade that instruction in spinning belongs with the traditions of girls' puberty initiations.[120]

We also note that tests are sometimes set by Percht or Holda for the young, as in the number of reels to be worked by a certain date, or diligence to be proved, as in the fairytale of Frau Holle which was recorded by the brothers Grimm. Since passing tests forms an important feature of initiation, we may find in these episodes more evidence of an earlier initiatory role for Percht or Holda.

The scenario of initiation might also provide an understanding of the division into 'hideous' and 'handsome' Perchten. The separation from villages and families which belongs to the rites of passage, represents a time of suspension of the ordinary forms of life. In this sacred period the candidate, shedding his human condition, may take upon himself the form of a beast, possibly divine, and symbolize through his behaviour the ferocity of the animal. And the violent activity, the horned masks, the fur hats and cloaks of the *schiache Perchten* indeed point to animal personification. We may observe, moreover, that in Salzburg the men would show their frightful aspect on the Thursdays of December and their handsome features later, on the *Perchtentag*. On this day they were attired in the costume of the region. They may thus have represented in their fearful form the non-human condition of their time of sacred separation, and in the latter costume the state of young manhood to which they had aspired.

Let us summarize that the association of the Ladies with the craft of spinning, their alliance with the young, their punitive and rewarding actions, underline their nature as educative forces and also point, since Percht and Holda are supernatural, to their function in the rites of passage.

The derivation of the spirits. The churchmen of the Middle Ages frequently equated Percht or Holda with Diana, and, in truth, there is much resemblance between the German spirits and the Roman deity who, in turn, had fused with Artemis of the Greeks. Artemis is, like the northern figures, a virgin huntress of the forest, like them a 'rushing' or a 'noisy' goddess (*keiladene, Iliad* 21,511), a creature of the wilderness (*agrotera, Iliad* 21,471), a nurse and teacher to the young (*kourotrophos*, Diod. Sicculus), a 'Lady of the golden Spindle' (*Iliad* 20,70), and a deity who was adored by masked devotees in orgiastic rites.

On the basis of such resemblances, Waldemar Liungman assumed that the cult of the Graeco-Roman godhead was imported into the Germanic countryside, the tradition being brought through the Balkans, which had preserved the Graeco-Roman heritage, and assimilated in the seventh century A.D. by the inhabitants of what is now Bavaria.[121] Liungman adduces, as evidence, testimony to the cult of Artemis in Sicily and on the Balkan peninsula, and he points to cult places of Diana in the upper Rhineland, near Trier, and in southern Gaul. He also cites Gregory of Tours and Cesarius of Arles for their condemnations of the Roman goddess. We note that the documentation does not pertain to the Germanic provinces, and we do not know whether in the Celtic regions the name Diana had not been used to designate a native mistress of the hunt.

If we turn to the manifestations of German and Germanic folk-belief, we observe not only the absence of the name Diana but also the presence of a host of Germanic

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designations. It is not likely that Germanic names were invented in many regions of Germanic speech for an imported spirit; if the name was already present in the countryside it must have designated a local demon. It is thus more likely that the Ladies Percht and Holda had arisen in and developed from indigenous belief. To affirm this view we may point to some features which are peculiar to the Germanic, and sometimes northern European, form, and which do not belong to the Roman goddess.

We are helped in this endeavour by the wealth of evidence of Scandinavian tradition. In the countries of north-Germanic speech knowledge concerning the ancient mistress of the wilderness was transmitted not only through the ways of folk-tradition but also through literary texts. In the medieval poetry and prose of the North there is much description of the form and function of the race of giants who inhabit the caves and glaciers of the uncultivated wilderness and who are designated as 'masters' of some part of the countryside, as in the titles *bergstjóri,* 'ruler of the mountain,' or *hauga herr,* 'lord of hills.' Frequently, especially in the prose, members of this race are guardians of sheep and goats, and the beasts tended by Thórir in a secret valley are sleeker and fatter than the sheep of ordinary men.[122]

The women of the family are pictured, frequently, astride a wolf, so that this animal is designated in the language of the skaldic poets as the riding steed of the troll-woman (giantess).[123] Since owning and tending wild beasts is a characteristic feature of woodland spirits throughout the world, we are justifed in classing the race of giants, also in this aspect, with the supernatural owners and rulers of the wilderness. Giants and giantesses appear, moreover, in north-Germanic myth where they are vital to the creation and the destruction of the world, and we may understand that they had held a firm position in Norse belief. Let us now point to some features which are common to the northern and continental form of the female woodland spirits.

Names. The German name Holle or Hulda finds a counterpart in Huld, the name of a giantess of the Old Icelandic texts, and in *huldre,* the wood-dwellers of Norwegian folk-tradition. Frau Môre has a counterpart in Mörn, Frau Harke in Herkja, Frau Gôde or Gaue in Gói of the Icelandic texts and in the folklore figure Goemor of Denmark.[124]

The season of the spirits. Like the continental figures, the giantesses belong clearly to the winter season. The family is designated as 'Rime giants' and its ancestor had been generated in melting ice. The giantess Skadi moves on snowshoes and is named the 'snowshoe goddess.'[125] The names Mjöll, Drífa, Fönn of some Saga giantesses actually have the meaning 'snow.'[126] Sudden cold and gusts of snow frequently precede a meeting between giantess and human hero.

The members of the race are especially active at midwinter-time; on the eve of Yule Hedinn meets a troll-woman in the forest. Hít arranges a Yuletime gathering of her relatives and friends,[127] and a giantess intrudes into a farm house on Christmas Eve to carry off a member of the household.[128] Giants and giantesses lived on in folk belief and retained their strong association with the midwinter feast. Gjǫ and Torre of Norway and Grýla of Iceland, with their retinue, haunt the snow-covered lands at Christmas time.

Relation to night. As Percht and Holda and their armies are, on the whole, nocturnal, so the folklore figures and the giantesses of the texts are creatures of the night. An Eddic giantess is known as Nótt ('night'); the giantess Hrímgerda of an Eddic poem meets her destruction through the rising dawn. The designation *myrkriður* ('riders of the dark') for giantesses equals the German *nahtfara* ('night rider') for night-wandering

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spirits, such as Percht and Holda.

Animal associations. The linkage with wolves of the northern spirits would find an analogue in the alliance of the German spirits with their dogs. The long or 'iron' nose of Percht and Holda appears to be the vestige of a bird form of the goddess, and the *Schnabelpercht* possesses, in actuality, a bird's beak. Beaked noses are frequently noted with the northern giantesses, and the giantess Margerdr has an 'iron' nose.[129] Some giantesses may assume the shape of birds, and some of these have claws and beaks of 'iron.'[130]

The names Geit and Geitla of some giantesses, meaning 'goat' and 'little goat,' point to their association or identity with goats, and we noted the goat form of some German spirits.[131] The giantesses Vargeisa and Hrímgerdr are fitted with some aspects of a horse, and a horse's head belongs also to Stampa of Tyrol.

Association with the Wild Hunt. Legends of the Wild Hunt abound above all in areas of Germanic speech; they are told, though less frequently, in provinces once settled by the Celts.[132] We do not meet them, at least not easily, in the Mediterranean regions.

Summary. The feasts of the Graeco-Roman goddesses are always celebrated in the spring or summer; the Ladies, usually, are related to the brightness of the day; stags rather than wolves or goats belong with the image of Artemis and of Diana. Though they may lead their nymphs in dance they are not associated with the legend of the Wild Hunt. It is true that in the Middle Ages Diana would preside over nocturnal and forbidden ceremonies; but here we are dealing with a degraded form of the goddess, one who had been turned by Christianity into a witch. (In Germanic tradition, however, night-time was frequently devoted to religious rites).

We may understand that, at least in the aspects named above, Percht and Holda share a particularly northern heritage, while of course partaking also of the common features of a Mistress of Wild Things, who represents, as expressed in *Der kleine Pauly,* the force of nature which is both life-giving and life-taking.

NOTES

1. Lotte Motz, 'Sister in the Cave,' *Arkiv för nordisk filolôgi* 90 (1980).
2. Jan de Vries, *Altgermanische Religionsgeschichte* (Berlin, 1956-57); E. O. G. Turville-Petre, *Myth and Religion of the North* (London, 1964); Brian Branston, *Gods of the North* (London, n.d.).
3. Dr. Viktor Waschnitius, *Percht, Holda und verwandte Gestalten,* in *Akademie der Wissenschaften, Wien, Sitzungsberichte,* historisch philosoph. Klasse 174 (1913-14). References to this work will be marked: Wasch.
4. Perchta is also known in Lower and Middle Franconia; a centre of Frau Holle lore is found in Hasloch on the river Main (Lower Franconia); the centre in Hesse is the mountain Meissner and in Thuringia the Hörselberg.
5. Wasch. 64, quoting: 'der gewissen spiegel.'
6. Wasch. 47, quoting: Stephanus Lanzkrana, *Die Hymelstrass* (1494).
7. Wasch. 64, quoting: *Discipuli Sermones dominicales* (fifteenth century).
8. Wasch. 60, quoting: *Tractatus de septem vitiis.*
9. Martin Luther, *Auslegung der Episteln* (Basel, 1622), p. 69.
10. Wasch. 33.
11. Wasch. 102.
12. Wasch. 71.

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13. Wasch. 36.
14. Wasch. 43, in southern Tyrol.
15. Wasch. 65. Frau Perchta especially receives food offerings.
16. Wasch. 18.
17. Wasch. 83; the area borders Hesse, Bavaria, and Thuringia.
18. Wasch. 93, in Nassau, Hesse.
19. Wasch. 72.
20. Wasch. 81; there is a *frauen Hullenbaum* near Wertheim and another in the district Tarforst of Lower Franconia.
21. Near the river Main in Lower Franconia, Wasch. 82, and near the Meissner in Hesse, Wasch. 89.
22. Wasch. 81, near the Hasloch in Lower Franconia.
23. Wasch. 70.
24. Wasch. 33.
25. Wasch. 23.
26. Wasch. 43, in Lower Austria.
27. Wasch. 80; she may also take them with her in her bag.
28. Wasch. 111, she brings six new undershirts for every child.
29. Wasch. 106, men go into their orchards at this time and promise their fruit trees that Frau Holle will come.
30. In other Tyrolean villages their time is usually Epiphany, Wasch. 88.
31. Wasch. 77.
32. In Thuringia, Wasch. 108, *Fastnachtsdonnerstag.*
33. Wasch. 57, in Salzburg; in Göttingen some of the produce of the field is left for her, Wasch. 112.
34. Wasch. 57.
35. Wasch. 38.
36. Wasch. 37.
37. Wasch. 73; the night of the Streggele in Zürich is before Christmas.
38. Wasch. 73; sometimes as many as a hundred young men will band together to draw the *Posterli* on a sled to the next town.
39. This 'Lady' is clad in fur and wears a terrifying mask.
40. Wasch. 80, 89; Frau Holle leads the hunt in Franconia; in northern parts we find Frau Gôde, de Fuik, or de Môre, Wasch. 129, 130, 131.
41. Otto Höfler, *Kultische Geheimbünde der Germanen* (Frankfurt, 1934), pp. 73-74, quoting: *Blockesberges Verrichtung.*
42. See ref. 9.
43. Höfler, as in ref. 41.
44. *Canon Episcopi,* in the version of Burchard of Worms, quoted by Jeffrey Russell, *Witchcraft in the Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 1972), p. 79.
45. Wasch. 82, quoting: *Thesaurus Pauperum* of the Tegernsee Manuscript (1458).
46. Wasch. 103, quoting: Thom. Reinesius, *Krit. Anmerkungen zu Rhyakinus.*
47. Wasch. 63-64, quoting *Discipuli Sermones* (1480).
48. Wasch. 87, this took place in Hesse.
49. Oswald A. Erich und Richard Beitl, *Wörterbuch der deutschen Volkskunde* (Stuttgart, 1974), entry: *wilde Jagd.*
50. *Die deutschen Sagen der Brüder Grimm,* Dr. Hermann Schneider, ed. (Berlin-Leipzig, n.d.) I, Ortssagen, nr. 270.
51. Wasch. 72.
52. Wasch. 80; the distaff has to be empty by Christmas Eve.
53. In Poltringen in Swabia, Wasch. 78.
54. Or flax may be wound around a girl's arm and then burnt off, Wasch. 56.
55. Wasch. 78, 83.
56. Wasch. 89, Frau Holle in Hesse.
57. As in Salzburg, Wasch. 56.
58. Wasch. 105, in Thuringia.
59. Wasch. 99, this happened in Neidenberge in the Voigtland.
60. It is called Polse and is eaten in Reichenfels, Wasch. 102.
61. Wasch. 89, near the mountain Meissner, in Hesse.
62. Wasch. 24, in the Mölltal.
63. Wasch. 19, this happened to a lad in Styria in the night of Epiphany.
64. Wasch. 89, the well is near the Meissner and had earlier housed the unborn children.

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65. Wasch. 35, in Lusarn.
66. As in Kallwang, in Styria, Wasch. 18; a farmer cried out: 'Oh, you poor Zodawaschel.'
67. Wasch. 31.
68. Wasch. 40, in Tyrol.
69. In Upper Austria, Wasch. 24; in Carinthia, Wasch. 54; in Silesia, Wasch. 119.
70. In the Rosenthal of Carinthia, Wasch. 27; in Bavaria, Wasch. 65.
71. The well-behaved, however, receive a Christmas tree from Frau Holle in Wertheim in Bavaria, Wasch. 81.
72. Wasch. 11.
73. Wasch. 113, the children have to perform heavy labour.
74. Wasch. 89.
75. Brüder Grimm, *Deutsche Märchen,* Thilo-Wilken, ed. (Ebenhausen bei München, 1911), *Frau Holle,* p. 237.
76. Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch* (Leipzig, 1854-), entry: *wild,* adj. II, A.B. . . . von Pflanzen, Tieren und Dämonen: 'im Walde wachsend, lebend;' it is possible that the word *wild* is linguistically related to the word *Wald,* 'forest,' in the same way as 'savage' is related to *sylva*; Middle High German *holzfrouwe* (*holz* — 'wood') interchanges with *wildez wîp* in the translation of *lamia,* quoted by Jacob Grimm, *Teutonic Mythology,* James Stallybrass, transl. of fourth ed. (Mass. 1968, repr.), p. 432.
77. Wasch. 105, 107.
78. Often, as in the valley of the Eisack, the three Thursdays before Christmas, Wasch. 32.
79. Wasch. 113.
80. Wasch. 108.
81. Wasch. 32.
82. Wasch. 78
83. Near Frankenhausen in Thuringia.
84. As in the area of Göttingen, Wasch. 11; Vintler speaks of Perchta with her 'iron nose,' quoted by Russell, as in ref. 44, p. 211.
85. Wasch. 82.
86. Wasch. 86.
87. Wasch. 119, in Silesia.
88. Wasch. 74.
89. Wasch. 102, in the Voigtland.
90. Wasch. 41.
91. As in Folgareit in Tyrol, Wasch. 44; near Fulda in Hesse Frau Holle cries for her absent husband, Wasch. 91.
92. The *Fronfastenweiber* of Baden ride on brooms, Wasch. 79.
93. As in Hesse, Wasch. 89, or in the Harz, Wasch. 113.
94. Wasch. 89, Frau Holle, or in the Harz, Wasch. 113.
95. Near the Meissner, Wasch. 90.
96. Lutz Röhrich, 'Europäische Wildgeistersagen,' *Rheinisches Jahrbuch für Volkskunde* 10 (1959), pp. 79-182, pp. 79-80.
97. Ivar Paulson, *Schutzgeister und Gottheiten des Wildes, der Jadgtiere und Fische, in Nordeurasien,* in *The Supernatural Owners of Nature,* Åke Hultkrantz, ed. (Stockholm, 1961), p. 51; with the Yukaghir of Siberia the guardian is in animal form.
98. Paulson, as in ref. 97, p. 271; they are an Altaic nation.
99. Paulson, as ref. 97, pp. 272 ff.
100. Der kleine Pauly, *Lexikon der Antike* (Stuttgart, 1964), entry: *Tierherrin.*
101. Hanns Bächthold-Stäubli, *Handwörterbuch des deutschen Volksaberglaubens* (Berlin, 1938-41), entry: *Wilde, Wilde Leute.*
102. Wasch. 44.
103. Valerie Höttges, *Typenverzeichnis der deutschen Riesen- und riesischen Teufelssagen,* Folklore Fellows Communications 122 (1937), p. 156.
104. Stäubli, as in ref. 101, entry: *Wolfshirt:* this figure is strongly present in Slavic tradition.
105. Such prohibitions occur in the Ecclesiastical Discipline of Regino, quoted by John T. McNeill and Helena M. Gamer, *Medieval Handbooks of Penance* (New York, 1938), p. 318; references are also found in the *Burgundian Penitential* of the eight or ninth century; Hermann Joseph Schmitz, *Die Bussbücher und die Bussdisziplin der Kirche* (Mainz, 1883-98), II, p. 322; the *Fleury Penitential,* Schmitz, II, p. 369; the *Merseburg Penitential,* Schmitz, II, p. 360; the *Scarapsus* of Saint Pirmin, McNeill and Gamer, p. 277; the *Anglo-Saxon Penitential,* ascribed to Albert of Bede, McNeill and Gamer, p. 277; the *Roman-Penitential* of Halitgan, McNeill and Gamer, p. 305; the *Corrector* of Burchard of Worms, McNeill and Gamer, p. 334;

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the *Penitential* of Theodore of Canterbury, McNeill and Gamer, p. 41. The rites are also condemned in a letter of Bonifatius to Pope Zacharias, *Monumenta Germaniae Historica,* Epistolae II, p. 30; in the Synod of Auxerre, Elisabeth Blum, *Das staatliche und kirchliche Recht des Frankenreiches* (1936), p. 34; the Synod of Tours, Karl Heferle and H. Leclerque, *Histoire des Conciles* (Paris, 1907-52), III, p. 191; the Synod of Rouen, Heferle and Leclerque, III, p. 288. It is true that some prohibitions may merely be a repetition of earlier statements; it is nevertheless clear that no other custom received so much attention from the Church. Other forbidden customs of the midwinter feast are the offering of gifts to rocks and wells, and customs related to spinning and to wool.

112. Nils Lid, *Jolebanden og vegetasjonsguddom* (Oslo, 1928), pp. 73 ff.

113. José-Maria Blázquez, *Die Mythologie der Althispanier,* in *Götter und Mythen im alten Europe,* Hans Wilhelm Haussig, ed. (Stuttgart, 1973), entry: *Hirschkult.* Mircea Eliade, *Zalmoxis, the Vanishing God* (Chicago, 1972), p. 14, speaks about wolf masquerades in the Balkans at Christmastime.

114. Michaele de Ferdinandy, *Die Mythologie der Ungarn,* in Haussig, as in ref. 113, entry: *Regös.*

115. Eliade, as in ref. 113, p. 15, speaking about the wolf masquerades of the Balkans: '. . . the original source of all these creations lies in the religious universe of the primitive hunter; it is a universe dominated by the mystical solidarity of the hunter and the game.'

116. As vividly and proudly described by Johan Turi, *Turi's Book of Lapland,* translated from a Danish translation by E. G. Nash (Oosterhout, 1968, repr.), pp. 110-13.

117. Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation,* Willard, R. Trask transl. (New York, 1958), p. 92.

118. Höfler, as in ref. 112, p. 46, note 162; in two German fairytales, recorded by the brothers Grimm, the opening and refilling of a stomach results in the rebirth of some creatures. *The Wolf and the Seven Kids* and *Little Red Riding Hood.*

119. Elmo Suhr, *The Spinning Aphrodite* (New York, 1969).

120. Eliade, as in ref. 117, p. 46; Richard Wolfram, 'Weiberbünde,' *Zeitschrift für Volkskunde* 42 (1932), p. 145.

121. Waldemar Liungman, *Traditionswanderungen: Euphrat-Rhein,* Folklore Fellows Communications 119 (1938), pp. 569-704.

122. *Grettis saga Ásmundarsonar,* ch. 61.

123. The wolf may be called 'Steed of Jarnfaxa,' or 'Horse of Leikn,' *Den Norsk-Islandske Skjaldedigtning,* ed. Finnur Jóusson, 453, 8, 4 and 149, 6, 3.

124. Mörn and Herkja appear in lists of giantesses' names.

125. *Gylfaginning* 12, in *Edda Snorra Sturlusonar,* ed. Finnur Jónsson (Copenhagen, 1931).

126. *Hversu Noregr byggdist,* ch. 1, in *Fornaldar sögur Norðurlanda,* ed. Guðni Jónsson (Reykjavik, 1959), I.

127. *Bárdar saga Snaefellsáss,* ch. 13.

128. *Grettis saga,* ch. 65; *jóstólfs saga hamramma,* ch. 16.

129. *Hjálmþés saga ok Ölvis,* ch. 12. in *Formaldar sögur* (as in ref. 126), IV.

130. A giantess changes into a crow in *Völsunga saga,* ch. 2; Skinnhufa and Vargeisa transform themselves into vultures with iron claws and beaks, *Hjálmþés saga,* ch. 20, in *Fornaldar sögur* (as in ref. 126), IV. Rauris lies in the Austrian province of Salzburg; the *Schnabelpercht* also carries large wooden scissors to open the stomach of the evil-doer: Gerlinde Proier, 'Die Schnabelpercht geht nur in Rauris um,' *Reiseland Österreich* (1, 1980), p. 14.

131. Geitla appears in a list of names of giantesses, *pulur, Edda Snorra,* as in ref. 125; Geit is a figure of *Jökuls þáttr Búasonar,* Ch 1.

132. Legends of the Wild Hunt are found in northern, western and central France and are very rarely met in the Languedoc, the southern portion, Paul Sébillot, *Le Folklore de France* (reprinted Paris, 1968) I, pp. 165-178. Only one story of the Wild Hunt is found in Katharine Briggs's collection *A Dictionary of British Folktales* (Bloomington, 1971).

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